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ABSTRACT

Research indicates that exemplary teachers share various characteristics, including a desire for continuous renewal. This book reports on a study to investigate exemplary teachers' personal and professional renewal throughout their career and selected factors that have enabled and/or constrained their renewal. The study involved six participants; female, veteran elementary school teachers in an urban setting. Several themes emerged from the data. First, participants considered learning for themselves and others of primary importance. Second, teachers' personal renewal as well as their wider community and professional contacts helped them keep their work in perspective. Third, organizational factors that enabled and/or constrained teachers' renewal included collegiality, the principal, district support, and resources. Results of the investigation suggested several characteristics shared by these teachers: (1) a disposition to question, reflect, seek alternatives, weigh consequences, and move toward increasingly good judgment; (2) knowledge of children, curriculum, the workplace, and the community; (3) a deep belief that education is important and that teachers can make a difference in the lives of some children; (4) an appreciation of the whole educational community; and (5) an explicit set of ethics that the teachers value and teach to their students. Appendices include the nomination form, interview schedules, a list of professional development activities for teachers, and questionnaire results. (Contains 178 references.) (ND)

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